

Cicero's "Torquatus" Presentation of Epicurean Ethics - from "On Ends"

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1. Reid Translation 1883

[13] V. To begin with the easiest opinions, let the theory of Epicurus first enter the arena. It is to most people thoroughly familiar, and you will perceive that I have set it forth with an exactness which is not commonly surpassed even by the adherents of the school themselves; for my desire is to find truth and not to confound as it were some opponent. Now the tenets of Epicurus concerning pleasure were once carefully advocated by Lucius Torquatus, a gentleman trained in every department of learning, and I replied to him, while Gains Triarius, a particularly serious and well instructed youth, was present at the debate.

[14] Well, both of them having come to me in my villa at Cumae to pay their respects, we had at first a little conversation about literary matters, in which both took the greatest interest....

[28] Then said Torquatus: 'I am quite of your opinion; without adverse criticism there can indeed be no debate, nor is proper debate compatible with passion or obstinacy. But, if you do not object, I have a reply I should like to make to what you have said.' 'Do you imagine,' I answered, 'that I should have said what I did, were I not anxious to hear you?' 'Do you prefer then that we should run over the whole system of Epicurus, or should confine the inquiry to the one subject of pleasure, on which the whole dispute turns?' 'Well,' said I, 'that must be as you decide.' 'This is what I will do, then,' said he; 'I will expound a single topic, and that the most important; natural science I shall leave for another occasion, when certainly I will demonstrate to you not only our philosopher's doctrine of the swerving of the atoms and of the sun's size, but will shew that very many blunders of Democritus have been criticized and set right by Epicurus; at present I shall speak concerning pleasure, though of course I have nothing new to say; still I am sure you will yourself yield to my arguments such as they are.' 'You may be sure,' said I, 'that I shall not be obstinate, and if you convince me of your propositions I will freely give them my assent.' 'I shall demonstrate them,' he replied, 'if only you exhibit that impartiality which you promise; but I would rather deliver an uninterrupted speech than put or answer questions.' 'As you please,' said I. Then he began to speak.

[29] IX. 'First, then,' said he, 'I shall plead my case on the lines laid down by the founder of our school himself: I shall define the essence and features of the problem before us, not because I imagine you to be

unacquainted with them, but with a view to the methodical progress of my speech. The problem before us then is, what is the climax and standard of things good, and this in the opinion of all philosophers must needs be such that we are bound to test all things by it, but the standard itself by nothing. Epicurus places this standard in pleasure, which he lays down to be the supreme good, while pain is the supreme evil; and he founds his proof of this on the following considerations.

[30] Every creature, as soon as it is born, seeks after pleasure and delights therein as in its supreme good, while it recoils from pain as its supreme evil, and banishes that, so far as it can, from its own presence, and this it does while still uncorrupted, and while nature herself prompts unbiased and unaffected decisions. So he says we need no reasoning or debate to shew why pleasure is matter for desire, pain for aversion. These facts he thinks are simply perceived, just as the fact that fire is hot, snow is white, and honey sweet, no one of which facts are we bound to support by elaborate arguments; it is enough merely to draw attention to the fact; and there is a difference between proof and formal argument on the one hand and a slight hint and direction of the attention on the other; the one process reveals to us mysteries and things under a veil, so to speak; the other enables us to pronounce upon patent and evident facts. Moreover, seeing that if you deprive a man of his senses there is nothing left to him, it is inevitable that nature herself should be the arbiter of what is in accord with or opposed to nature. Now what facts does she grasp or with what facts is her decision to seek or avoid any particular thing concerned, unless the facts of pleasure and pain?

[31] There are however some of our own school, who want to state these principles with greater refinement, and who say that it is not enough to leave the question of good or evil to the decision of sense, but that thought and reasoning also enable us to understand both that pleasure in itself is matter for desire and that pain is in itself matter for aversion. So they say that there lies in our minds a kind of natural and inbred conception leading us to feel that the one thing is fit for us to seek, the other to reject. Others again, with whom I agree, finding that many arguments are alleged by philosophers to prove that pleasure is not to be reckoned among things good nor pain among things evil, judge that we ought not to be too confident about our case, and think that we should lead proof and argue carefully and carry on the debate about pleasure and pain by using the most elaborate reasonings.

[32] X. But that I may make plain to you the source of all the mistakes made by those who inveigh against pleasure and eulogize pain, I will unfold the whole system and will set before you the very language held by that great discoverer of truth and that master-builder, if I may style him so, of the life of happiness. Surely no one recoils from or dislikes or avoids pleasure in itself because it is pleasure, but because great pains come upon those who do not know how to follow pleasure rationally. Nor again is there any one who loves or pursues or wishes to win pain on its own account, merely because it is pain, but rather because circumstances sometimes occur which compel him to seek some great pleasure at the cost of exertion and pain. To come down to petty details, who among us ever undertakes any toilsome bodily exercise, except in the hope of gaining some advantage from it? Who again would have any right to reproach either a man who desires to be surrounded by pleasure unaccompanied by any annoyance, or another man who shrinks from any pain which is not productive of pleasure?

[33] But in truth we do blame and deem most deserving of righteous hatred the men who, enervated and depraved by the fascination of momentary pleasures, do not foresee the pains and troubles which are sure to befall them, because they are blinded by desire, and in the same error are involved those who prove traitors to their duties through effeminacy of spirit, I mean because they shun exertions and trouble. Now it is easy and simple to mark the difference between these cases. For at our seasons of ease, when we have untrammelled freedom of choice, and when nothing debars us from the power of following the course that pleases us best, then pleasure is wholly a matter for our selection and pain for our rejection. On certain occasions however either through the inevitable call of duty or through stress of circumstances, it will often come to pass that we must put pleasures from us and must make no protest against annoyance. So in such cases the principle of selection adopted by the wise man is that he should either by refusing certain pleasures attain to other and greater pleasures or by enduring pains should ward off pains still more severe.

[34] Holding as I do this theory, what reason should I have for fearing that I may not be able to bring our Torquati into accord with it? You a little while ago shewed at once your copious memory and your friendly

and kindly feeling for me by quoting their examples; yet you neither perverted me by eulogizing my ancestors nor made me less vigorous in my reply. Now I ask, what interpretation do you put upon the actions of these men? Do you believe that they attacked the armed foe, or practiced such cruelty towards their own children and their own flesh and blood, absolutely without giving a thought to their own interest or their own advantage? Why, even the beasts do not act so as to produce such a tumult and confusion that we cannot see the purpose of their movements and attacks; do you believe that men so exceptional achieved such great exploits from no motive whatever?

[35] What the motive was, I shall examine presently; meanwhile I shall maintain this, that if they performed those actions, which are beyond question noble, from some motive, their motive was not virtue apart from all else. He stripped the foe of his necklet. Yes, and he donned it himself to save his own life. But he faced a grave danger. Yes, with the whole army looking on. What did he gain by it? Applause and affection, which are the strongest guarantees for passing life in freedom from fear. He punished his son with death. If purposelessly, I should be sorry to be descended from one so abominable and so cruel; but if he did it to enforce by his self-inflicted pain the law of military command, and by fear of punishment to control the army in the midst of a most critical war, then he had in view the preservation of his fellow-countrymen, which he knew to involve his own.

[36] And these principles have a wide application. There is one field in which the eloquence of your school has been wont especially to vaunt itself, and your own eloquence in particular, for you are an eager investigator of the past, I mean the stories of illustrious and heroic men and the applause of their actions viewed as looking not to any reward but to the inherent comeliness of morality. All such arguments are upset when once the principle of choice which I have just described has been established, whereby either pleasures are neglected for the purpose of obtaining pleasures still greater, or pains are incurred for the sake of escaping still greater pains.

XI. [37] But let what has been said on this occasion suffice concerning the brilliant and famous actions of illustrious men. We shall indeed find a fitting opportunity by and by for discoursing about the tendency of all the virtues towards pleasure. At present however I shall shew what is the essence and what are the characteristics of pleasure, so as to remove all confusion caused by ignorant people, and to make it clear how serious, how sober, how austere is that school which is esteemed to be pleasure-seeking, luxurious and effeminate. For the pleasure which we pursue is not that alone which excites the natural constitution itself by a kind of sweetness, and of which the sensual enjoyment is attended by a kind of agreeableness, but we look upon the greatest pleasure as that which is enjoyed when all pain is removed. Now inasmuch as whenever we are released from pain, we rejoice in the mere emancipation and freedom from all annoyance, and everything whereat we rejoice is equivalent to pleasure, just as everything whereat we are troubled is equivalent to pain, therefore the complete release from pain is rightly termed pleasure. For just as the mere removal of annoyance brings with it the realization of pleasure, whenever hunger and thirst have been banished by food and drink, so in every case the banishment of pain ensures its replacement by pleasure.

[38] Therefore Epicurus refused to allow that there is any middle term between pain and pleasure; what was thought by some to be a middle term, the absence of all pain, was not only itself pleasure, but the highest pleasure possible. Surely any one who is conscious of his own condition must needs be either in a state of pleasure or in a state of pain. Epicurus thinks that the highest degree of pleasure is defined by the removal of all pain, so that pleasure may afterwards exhibit diversities and differences but is incapable of increase or extension.

[39] But actually at Athens, as my father used to tell me, when he wittily and humorously ridiculed the Stoics, there is in the Ceramicus a statue of Chrysippus, sitting with his hand extended, which hand indicates that he was fond of the following little argument: Does your hand, being in its present condition, feel the lack of anything at all? Certainly of nothing. But if pleasure were the supreme good, it would feel a lack. I agree. Pleasure then is not the supreme good. My father used to say that even a statue would not talk in that way, if it had power of speech. The inference is shrewd enough as against the Cyrenaics, but does not touch Epicurus. For if the only pleasure were that which, as it were, tickles the senses, if I may say so, and attended by sweetness overflows them and insinuates itself into them, neither the hand nor any other

member would be able to rest satisfied with the absence of pain apart from a joyous activity of pleasure. But if it is the highest pleasure, as Epicurus believes, to be in no pain, then the first admission, that the hand in its then existing condition felt no lack, was properly made to you, Chrysippus, but the second improperly, I mean that it would have felt a lack had pleasure been the supreme good. It would certainly feel no lack, and on this ground, that anything which is cut off from the state of pain is in the state of pleasure.

[40] XII. Again, the truth that pleasure is the supreme good can be most easily apprehended from the following consideration. Let us imagine an individual in the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them; I ask what circumstances can we describe as more excellent than these or more desirable? A man whose circumstances are such must needs possess, as well as other things, a robust mind subject to no fear of death or pain, because death is apart from sensation, and pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slowness to its continuance.

[41] When in addition we suppose that such a man is in no awe of the influence of the gods, and does not allow his past pleasures to slip away, but takes delight in constantly recalling them, what circumstance is it possible to add to these, to make his condition better? Imagine on the other hand a man worn by the greatest mental and bodily pains which can befall a human being, with no hope before him that his lot will ever be lighter, and moreover destitute of pleasure either actual or probable; what more pitiable object can be mentioned or imagined? But if a life replete with pains is above all things to be shunned, then assuredly the supreme evil is life accompanied by pain; and from this view it is a consistent inference that the climax of things good is life accompanied by pleasure. Nor indeed can our mind find any other ground whereon to take its stand as though already at the goal; and all its fears and sorrows are comprised under the term pain, nor is there any other thing besides which is able merely by its own character to cause us vexation or pangs. In addition to this the germs of desire and aversion and generally of action originate either in pleasure or in pain.

[42] This being so, it is plain that all right and praiseworthy action has the life of pleasure for its aim. Now inasmuch as the climax or goal or limit of things good (which the Greeks term *telos*) is that object which is not a means to the attainment of any thing else, while all other things are a means to its attainment, we must allow that the climax of things good is to live agreeably.

XIII. Those who find this good in virtue and virtue only, and dazzled by the glory of her name, fail to perceive what it is that nature craves, will be emancipated from heresy of the deepest dye, if they will deign to lend ear to Epicurus. For unless your grand and beautiful virtues were productive of pleasure, who would suppose them to be either meritorious or desirable? Yes, just as we regard with favour the physician's skill not for his art's sake merely but because we prize sound health, and just as the pilot's art is praised on utilitarian and not on artistic grounds, because it supplies the principles of good navigation, so wisdom, which we must hold to be the art of living, would be no object of desire, if it were productive of no advantage; but it is in fact desired, because it is to us as an architect that plans and accomplishes pleasure.

[43] (You are now aware what kind of pleasure I mean, so the odium of the term must not shake the foundation of my argument.) For seeing that the life of men is most of all troubled by ignorance about the goodness and badness of things, and on account of this blindness men are often robbed of the intensest pleasures and also are racked by the severest mental pains, we must summon to our aid wisdom, that she may remove from us all alarms and passions, and stripping us of our heedless confidence in all false imaginations, may offer herself as our surest guide to pleasure. Wisdom indeed is alone able to drive sadness from our minds, and to prevent us from quaking with fear, and if we sit at her feet we may live in perfect calm, when once the heat of every passion has been cooled. Verily the passions are unconscionable, and overthrow not merely individual men, but whole families, and often shake the foundations of the entire commonwealth.

[44] From passions spring enmities, divisions, strifes, rebellions and wars. Nor do the passions only air their pride abroad; they do not merely attack others than ourselves in their blind onset; but even when imprisoned within our own breasts they are at variance and strife one with another; and the inevitable result of this is life of the bitterest kind, so that the wise man alone, who has out back and pruned away all vanity and delusion,

can live contentedly within the bounds prescribed by nature, emancipated from all sorrow and from all fear.

[45] I ask what classification is either more profitable or more suited to the life of happiness than that adopted by Epicurus? He affirmed that there is one class of passions which are both natural and needful; another class which are natural without being needful; a third class which are neither natural nor needful; and such are the conditions of these passions that the needful class are satisfied without much trouble or expenditure; nor is it much that the natural passions crave, since nature herself makes such wealth as will satisfy her both easy of access and moderate in amount; and it is not possible to discover any boundary or limit to false passions.

[46] XIV. But if we see that all human life is agitated by confusion and ignorance, and that wisdom alone can redeem us from the violence of our lusts and from the menace of our fears, and alone can teach us to endure humbly even the outrages of fortune, and alone can guide us into every path which leads to peace and calm, why should we hesitate to say that wisdom is desirable in view of pleasures, and unwisdom to be shunned on account of annoyances?

[47] And on the same principles we shall assert that even temperance is not desirable for its own sake, but because it brings quiet to our hearts and soothes them and appeases them by a kind of harmony. Temperance is in truth the virtue which warns us to follow reason in dealing with the objects of desire or repugnance. Nor indeed is it enough to resolve what we are to do or omit, but we should also abide by our resolve. Most men, however, being unable to uphold and maintain a determination they have themselves made, are overmastered and enervated when the image of pleasure is thrust before their eyes, and surrender themselves to be bound by the chain of their lusts, nor do they foresee what the issue will be, and so for the sake of some paltry and needless pleasure, which would be procured by other means if they chose, and with which they might dispense and yet not suffer pain, rush sometimes into grievous diseases, sometimes into ruin, sometimes into disgrace, and often even become subject to the penalties imposed by the statutes and the courts.

[48] Men however whose aim is so to enjoy their pleasures that no pains may ensue in consequence of them, and who retain their own judgment, which prevents them from succumbing to pleasure and doing things which they feel should not be done, these achieve the greatest amount of pleasure by neglecting pleasure. Such men actually often suffer pain, fearing that, if they do not, they may incur greater pain. From these reflections it is easily understood that intemperance on the one hand is not repugnant in and for itself, and on the other that temperance is an object of desire, not because it flees from pleasures, but because it is followed by greater pleasures.

[49] XV. The same principles will be found to apply to courage; for neither the performance of work nor the suffering of pain is in itself attractive, nor yet endurance, nor diligence, nor watchings nor much-praised industry itself, no, nor courage either, but we devote ourselves to all such things for the purpose of passing our life in freedom from anxiety and alarm, and of emancipating both mind and body, so far as we can succeed in doing so, from annoyance. As in truth, on the one hand, the entire stability of a peaceful life is shaken by the fear of death, and it is wretched to succumb to pains and to bear them in an abject and feeble spirit, and many have through such weakness of mind brought ruin on their parents, many on their friends and some on their country, so on the other hand a strong and exalted spirit is free from all solicitude and torment, as it thinks lightly of death, which brings those who are subject to it into the same state they were in before they were born, and such a spirit is so disciplined to encounter pains that it recalls how the most severe of them are terminated by death, while the slighter grant many seasons of rest, and those which lie between these two classes are under our control, so that if we find them endurable, we may tolerate them, if otherwise, we may with an unruffled mind make our exit from life, when we find it disagreeable, as we would from a theater. These facts enable us to see that cowardice and weakness are not blamed, nor courage and endurance applauded, for what they are in themselves, but that the former qualities are spurned, because productive of pain, while the latter are sought, because productive of pleasure.

[50] XVI. Justice still is left to complete our statement concerning the whole of virtue, but considerations nearly similar may be urged. Just as I have proved wisdom, temperance and courage to be linked with

pleasure, so that they cannot possibly by any means be sundered or severed from it, so we must deem of justice, which not only never injures any person, but on the contrary always produces some benefit, not solely by reason of its own power and constitution, whereby it calms our minds, but also by inspiring hope that we shall lack none of the objects which nature when uncorrupted craves. And as recklessness and caprice and cowardice always torture the mind and always bring unrest and tumult, so if wickedness has established itself in a man's mind, the mere fact of its presence causes tumult; if moreover it has carried out any deed, however secretly it may have acted, yet it will never feel a trust, that the action will always remain concealed. In most cases the acts of wicked men are at first dogged by suspicion, then by talk and rumour, then by the prosecutor, then by the judge; many have actually informed against themselves, as in your own consulship.

[51] But if there are any who seem to themselves to be sufficiently barricaded and fortified against all privity on the part of their fellow men, still they tremble before the privity of the gods, and imagine that the very cares by which their minds are devoured night and day are imposed upon them, with a view to their punishment, by the eternal gods. Again, from wicked acts what new influence can accrue tending to the diminution of annoyances, equal to that which tends to their increase, not only from consciousness of the actions themselves, but also from legal penalties and the hatred of the community? And yet some men exhibit no moderation in money-making, or office, or military command, or wantonness, or gluttony, or the remaining passions, which are not lessened but rather intensified by the trophies of wickedness, so that such persons seem fit to be repressed rather than to be taught their error.

[52] True reason beckons men of properly sound mind to pursue justice, fairness and honour; nor are acts of injustice advantageous to a man without eloquence or influence, who cannot easily succeed in what he attempts, nor maintain his success if he wins it, and large resources either of wealth or of talent suit better with a generous spirit, for those who exhibit this spirit attract to themselves goodwill and affection, which is very well calculated to ensure a peaceful life; and this is the truer in that men have no reason for sinning.

[53] For the passions which proceed from nature are easily satisfied without committing any wrong; while we must not succumb to those which are groundless, since they yearn for nothing worthy of our craving, and more loss is involved in the mere fact of wrong doing, than profit in the results which are produced by the wrong doing. So one would not be right in describing even justice as a thing to be wished for on its own account, but rather because it brings with it a very large amount of agreeableness. For to be the object of esteem and affection is agreeable just because it renders life safer and more replete with pleasures. Therefore we think that wickedness should be shunned, not alone on account of the disadvantages which fall to the lot of the wicked, but much rather because when it pervades a man's soul it never permits him to breathe freely or to rest.

[54] But if the encomium passed even on the virtues themselves, over which the eloquence of all other philosophers especially runs riot, can find no vent unless it be referred to pleasure, and pleasure is the only thing which invites us to the pursuit of itself, and attracts us by reason of its own nature, then there can be no doubt that of all things good it is the supreme and ultimate good, and that a life of happiness means nothing else but a life attended by pleasure.

[55] XVII. I will concisely explain what are the corollaries of these sure and well grounded opinions. People make no mistake about the standards of good and evil themselves, that is about pleasure or pain, but err in these matters through ignorance of the means by which these results are to be brought about. Now we admit that mental pleasures and pains spring from bodily pleasures and pains; so I allow what you alleged just now, that any of our school who differ from this opinion are out of court; and indeed I see there are many such, but unskilled thinkers. I grant that although mental pleasure brings us joy and mental pain brings us trouble, yet each feeling takes its rise in the body and is dependent on the body, though it does not follow that the pleasures and pains of the mind do not greatly surpass those of the body. With the body indeed we can perceive only what is present to us at the moment, but with the mind the past and future also. For granting that we feel just as great pain when our body is in pain, still mental pain may be very greatly intensified if we imagine some everlasting and unbounded evil to be menacing us. And we may apply the same argument to pleasure, so that it is increased by the absence of such fears.

[56] By this time so much at least is plain, that the intensest pleasure or the intensest annoyance felt in the mind exerts more influence on the happiness or wretchedness of life than either feeling, when present for an equal space of time in the body. We refuse to believe, however, that when pleasure is removed, grief instantly ensues, excepting when perchance pain has taken the place of the pleasure; but we think on the contrary that we experience joy on the passing away of pains, even though none of that kind of pleasure which stirs the senses has taken their place; and from this it may be understood how great a pleasure it is to be without pain.

[57] But as we are elated by the blessings to which we look forward, so we delight in those which we call to memory. Fools however are tormented by the recollection of misfortunes; wise men rejoice in keeping fresh the thankful recollection of their past blessings. Now it is in the power of our wills to bury our adversity in almost unbroken forgetfulness, and to agreeably and sweetly remind ourselves of our prosperity. But when we look with penetration and concentration of thought upon things that are past, then, if those things are bad, grief usually ensues, if good, joy.

XVIII. What a noble and open and plain and straight avenue to a happy life! It being certain that nothing can be better for man than to be relieved of all pain and annoyance, and to have full enjoyment of the greatest pleasures both of mind and of body, do you not see how nothing is neglected which assists our life more easily to attain that which is its aim, the supreme good? Epicurus, the man whom you charge with being an extravagant devotee of pleasures, cries aloud that no one can live agreeably unless he lives a wise, moral and righteous life, and that no one can live a wise, moral and righteous life without living agreeably.

[58] It is not possible for a community to be happy when there is rebellion, nor for a house when its masters are at strife; much less can a mind at disaccord and at strife with itself taste any portion of pleasure undefiled and unimpeded. Nay more, if the mind is always beset by desires and designs which are recalcitrant and irreconcilable, it can never see a moment's rest or a moment's peace.

[59] But if agreeableness of life is thwarted by the more serious bodily diseases, how much more must it inevitably be thwarted by the diseases of the mind! Now the diseases of the mind are the measureless and false passions for riches, fame, power and even for the lustful pleasures. To these are added griefs, troubles, sorrows, which devour the mind and wear it away with anxiety, because men do not comprehend that no pain should be felt in the mind, which is unconnected with an immediate or impending bodily pain. Nor indeed is there among fools any one who is not sick with some one of these diseases; there is none therefore who is not wretched.

[60] There is also death which always hangs over them like the stone over Tantalus, and again superstition, which prevents those who are tinged by it from ever being able to rest. Moreover they have no memories for their past good fortune, and no enjoyment of their present; they only wait for what is to come, and as this cannot but be uncertain, they are wasted with anguish and alarm; and they are tortured most of all when they become conscious, all too late, that their devotion to wealth or military power, or influence, or fame has been entirely in vain. For they achieve none of the pleasures which they ardently hoped to obtain and so underwent numerous and severe exertions.

[61] Turn again to another class of men, trivial and pusillanimous, either always in despair about everything, or ill-willed, spiteful, morose, misanthropic, slanderous, unnatural; others again are slaves to the frivolities of the lover; others are aggressive, others reckless or impudent, while these same men are uncontrolled and inert, never persevering in their opinion, and for these reasons there never is in their life any intermission of annoyance. Therefore neither can any fool be happy, nor any wise man fail to be happy. And we advocate these views far better and with much greater truth than do the Stoics, since they declare that nothing good exists excepting that vague phantom which they call morality, a title imposing rather than real; and that virtue being founded on this morality demands no pleasure and is satisfied with her own resources for the attainment of happiness.

[62] XIX. But these doctrines may be stated in a certain manner so as not merely to disarm our criticism, but actually to secure our sanction. For this is the way in which Epicurus represents the wise man as continually

happy; he keeps his passions within bounds; about death he is indifferent; he holds true views concerning the eternal gods apart from all dread; he has no hesitation in crossing the boundary of life, if that be the better course. Furnished with these advantages he is continually in a state of pleasure, and there is in truth no moment at which he does not experience more pleasures than pains. For he remembers the past with thankfulness, and the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness, nor is he in dependence on the future, but awaits it while enjoying the present; he is also very far removed from those defects of character which I quoted a little time ago, and when he compares the fool's life with his own, he feels great pleasure. And pains, if any befall him, have never power enough to prevent the wise man from finding more reasons for joy than for vexation.

[63] It was indeed excellently said by Epicurus that fortune only in a small degree crosses the wise man's path, and that his greatest and most important undertakings are executed in accordance with his own design and his own principles, and that no greater pleasure can be reaped from a life which is without end in time, than is reaped from this which we know to have its allotted end. He judged that the logic of your school possesses no efficacy either for the amelioration of life or for the facilitation of debate. He laid the greatest stress on natural science. That branch of knowledge enables us to realize clearly the force of words and the natural conditions of speech and the theory of consistent and contradictory expressions; and when we have learned the constitution of the universe we are relieved of superstition, are emancipated from the dread of death, are not agitated through ignorance of phenomena, from which ignorance, more than any thing else, terrible panics often arise; finally, our characters will also be improved when we have learned what it is that nature craves. Then again if we grasp a firm knowledge of phenomena, and uphold that canon, which almost fell from heaven into human ken, that test to which we are to bring all our judgments concerning things, we shall never succumb to any man's eloquence and abandon our opinions.

[64] Moreover, unless the constitution of the world is thoroughly understood, we shall by no means be able to justify the verdicts of our senses. Further, our mental perceptions all arise from our sensations; and if these are all to be true, as the system of Epicurus proves to us, then only will cognition and perception become possible. Now those who invalidate sensations and say that perception is altogether impossible, cannot even clear the way for this very argument of theirs when they have thrust the senses aside. Moreover, when cognition and knowledge have been invalidated, every principle concerning the conduct of life and the performance of its business becomes invalidated. So from natural science we borrow courage to withstand the fear of death, and firmness to face superstitious dread, and tranquility of mind, through the removal of ignorance concerning the mysteries of the world, and self-control, arising from the elucidation of the nature of the passions and their different classes, and as I shewed just now, our leader again has established the canon and criterion of knowledge and thus has imparted to us a method for marking off falsehood from truth.

[65] XX. One topic remains, which is of prime importance for this discussion, that relating to friendship, which you declare will cease to exist, if pleasure be the supreme good, yet Epicurus makes this declaration concerning it, that of all the aids to happiness procured for us by wisdom, none is greater than friendship, none more fruitful, none more delightful. Nor in fact did he sanction this view by his language alone, but much more by his life and actions and character. And the greatness of friendship is made evident by the imaginary stories of the ancients, in which, numerous and diversified as they are, and reaching back to extreme antiquity, scarce three pairs of friends are mentioned, so that beginning with Theseus you end with Orestes. But in truth within the limits of a single school, and that restricted in numbers, what great flocks of friends did Epicurus secure, and how great was that harmony of affection wherein they all agreed! And his example is followed by the Epicureans in our day also. But let us return to our theme; there is no need to speak of persons.

[66] I see then that friendship has been discussed by our school in three ways. Some, denying that the pleasures which affect our friends are in themselves as desirable to us as those we desire for ourselves, a view which certain persons think shakes the foundation of friendship, still defend their position, and in my opinion easily escape from their difficulties. For they affirm that friendship, like the virtues of which we spoke already, cannot be dissociated from pleasure. Now since isolation and a life without friends abound in treacheries and alarms, reason herself advises us to procure friendships, by the acquisition of which the spirit is strengthened, and cannot then be severed from the hope of achieving pleasures.

[67] And as enmity, spitefulness, scorn, are opposed to pleasures, so friendships are not only the truest promoters, but are actually efficient causes of pleasures, as well to a man's friends as to himself; and friends not only have the immediate enjoyment of these pleasures but are elate with hope as regards future and later times. Now because we can by no means apart from friendship preserve the agreeableness of life strong and unbroken, nor further can we maintain friendship itself unless we esteem our friends in the same degree as ourselves; on that account this principle is acted on in friendship, and so friendship is linked with pleasure. Truly we both rejoice at the joy of our friends as much as at our own joy, and we are equally pained by their vexations.

[68] Therefore the wise man will entertain the same feeling for his friend as for himself, and the very same efforts which he would undergo to procure his own pleasure, these he will undergo to procure that of his friend. And all that we said of the virtues to shew how they always have their root in pleasures, must be said over about friendship. For it was nobly declared by Epicurus, almost in these words: "It is one and the same feeling which strengthens the mind against the fear of eternal or lasting evil, and which clearly sees that in this actual span of life the protection afforded by friendship is the most powerful of all."

[69] There are however certain Epicureans who are somewhat more nervous in facing the reproaches of your school, but are still shrewd enough ; these are afraid that if we suppose friendship to be desirable with a view to our own pleasure, friendship may appear to be altogether maimed, as it were. So they say that while the earliest meetings and associations and tendencies towards the establishment of familiarity do arise on account of pleasure, yet when experience has gradually produced intimacy, then affection ripens to such a degree that though no interest be served by the friendship, yet friends are loved in themselves and for their own sake. Again, if by familiarity we get to love localities, shrines, cities, the exercise ground, the park, dogs, horses, and exhibitions either of gymnastics or of combats with beasts, how much more easily and properly may this come about when our familiarity is with human beings?

[70] Men are found to say that there is a certain treaty of alliance which binds wise men not to esteem their friends less than they do themselves. Such alliance we not only understand to be possible, but often see it realized, and it is plain that nothing can be found more conducive to pleasantness of life than union of this kind. From all these different views we may conclude that not only are the principles of friendship left unconstrained, if the supreme good be made to reside in pleasure, but that without this view it is entirely impossible to discover a basis for friendship.

[71] XXI. Wherefore, if the doctrines I have stated are more dazzling and luminous than the sun itself, if they are draughts drawn from nature's spring, if our whole argument establishes its credit entirely by an appeal to our senses, that is to say, to witnesses who are untainted and unblemished, if speechless babes and even dumb beasts almost cry out that with nature for our governor and guide there is no good fortune but pleasure, no adverse fortune but pain, and their verdict upon these matters is neither perverted nor tainted, are we not bound to entertain the greatest gratitude for the man who, lending his ear to this voice of nature, as I may call it, grasped it in so strong and serious a spirit that he guided all thoroughly sober-minded men into the track of a peaceful, quiet, restful, happy life? And though you think him ill-educated, the reason is that he held no education of any worth, but such as promoted the ordered life of happiness.

[72] Was he the man to spend his time in conning poets as I and Triarius do on your advice, when they afford no substantial benefit, and all the enjoyment they give is childish in kind, or was he the man to waste himself, like Plato, upon music, geometry, mathematics and astronomy, which not only start from false assumptions and so cannot be true, but if they were true would not aid us one whit towards living a more agreeable, that is a better life? Was he, I ask, the man to pursue those arts and thrust behind him the art of living, an art of such moment, so laborious too, and correspondingly rich in fruit? Epicurus then is not uneducated, but those persons are uninstructed who think that subjects which it is disgraceful to a boy not to have learned, are to be learned through life into old age?

2. Rackham Translation 1931

This is the 1931 Loeb Edition, translated by H.A. Rackham. Another good internet version of the same text with line numbers is here at [LacusCurtius](#).

In this selection from book I, sections 9 through 21, Lucius Torquatus delivers a monologue explaining and defending [Epicurean ethics](#):

V.13 To begin with what is easiest, let us first pass in review the system of Epicurus, which to most men is the best known of any. Our exposition of it, as you shall see, will be as accurate as any usually given even by the professed adherents of his school. For our object is to discover the truth, not to refute someone as an opponent.

An elaborate defense of the hedonistic theory of Epicurus was once delivered by Lucius Torquatus, a student well versed in all the systems of philosophy; to him I replied, and Gaius Triarius, a youth of remarkable learning and seriousness of character, assisted at the discussion. Both of these gentlemen had called to pay me their respects at my place at Cumae. We first exchanged a few remarks about literature, of which both were enthusiastic students. Then Torquatus said, 'As we have for once found you at leisure, I am resolved to hear the reason why you regard my master Epicurus, not indeed with hatred, as those who do not share his views mostly do, but at all events with disapproval. I myself consider him as the one person who had discerned the truth, and who has delivered men from the gravest errors and imparted to them all there is to know about well-being and happiness. The fact is, I think that you are like our friend Triarius, and dislike Epicurus because he has neglected the graces of style that you find in your Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus. For I can scarcely bring myself to believe that you think his opinions untrue.' "Let me assure you, Torquatus," said I, "that you are entirely mistaken. With your master's style I have no fault to find. He expresses his meaning adequately, and gives me a plain intelligible statement. Not that I despise eloquence in a philosopher if he has it to offer, but I should not greatly insist on it if he has not. But his matter I do not find so satisfactory, and that in more points than one. However, 'many men, many minds': so it is possible that I am mistaken." "What is it, pray," he said, "to which you take exception? For I recognize you as a just critic, provided you really know what his doctrines are." "Oh," said I, "I know the whole of Epicurus's opinions well enough, — unless you think that Phaedrus or Zeno did not tell me the truth. I have heard both of them lecture, though to be sure they convinced me of nothing but their own devotion to the system. Indeed I regularly attended those professors, in company with our friend Atticus, who for his part had an admiration for them both, and a positive affection for Phaedrus. Every day we used to discuss together in private what we had heard at lecture, and there was never any dispute as to what I could understand; the question was, what I could accept as true."

...

VIII I had spoken rather with the intention of drawing out Torquatus than of delivering a discourse of my own. But Triarius interposed, with a smile: "Why, you have practically expelled Epicurus altogether from the philosophic choir. What have you left to him except that, whatever his style may be, you find his meaning intelligible? His doctrines in Natural Philosophy were second-hand, and in your opinion unsound at that; and his attempts to improve on his authority only made things worse. Dialectic he had none. His identification of the Chief Good with pleasure in the first place was in itself an error, and secondly this also was not original; for it had been said before, and said better, by Aristippus. To crown all you added that Epicurus was a person of no education." "Well, Triarius," I rejoined, "when one disagrees with a man, it is essential to say what it is that one objects to in his views. What should prevent me from being an Epicurean, if I accepted the doctrines of Epicurus? especially as the system is an exceedingly easy one to master. You must not find fault with members of opposing schools for criticizing each other's opinions; though I always feel that insult and abuse, or ill-tempered wrangling and bitter, obstinate controversy are beneath the dignity of philosophy." "I am quite of your mind," said Torquatus; "it is impossible to debate without criticizing, but it is equally impossible to debate properly with ill-temper or obstinacy. But I have something I should like to say in reply to all this, if it will not weary you." "Do you suppose," said I, "that I should have said what I have, unless I wanted to hear you?" "Then would you like me to make a rapid review of the whole of Epicurus's system, or to discuss the single topic of pleasure, which is the one main subject of dispute?" "Oh," I said, "that must be for you to decide." "Very well then," said he, "this is what I will do, I will expound a single topic, and that the most

important. Natural Philosophy we will postpone; though I will undertake to prove to you both your swerve of the atoms and size of the sun, and also that very many errors of Democritus were criticized and corrected by Epicurus. But on the present occasion I will speak about pleasure; not that I have anything original to contribute, yet I am confident that what I say will command even your acceptance." "Be assured," I said, "that I shall not be obstinate, but will gladly own myself convinced if you can prove your case to my satisfaction." "I shall do so," he rejoined, "provided you are as fair-minded as you promise. But I prefer to employ continuous discourse rather than question and answer." "As you please," said I. So he began.

IX. I will start then in the manner approved by the author of the system himself, by settling what are the essence and qualities of the thing that is the object of our inquiry; not that I suppose you to be ignorant of it, but because this is the logical method of procedure. We are inquiring, then, what is the final and ultimate Good, which as all philosophers are agreed must be of such a nature as to be the End to which all other things are means, while it is not itself a means to anything else. This Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the Chief Good, pain the Chief Evil. This he sets out to prove as follows: Every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil, and so far as possible avoids it. This it does as long as it remains unperverted, at the prompting of Nature's own unbiased and honest verdict.

Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to prove that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided. These facts, he thinks, are perceived by the senses, as that fire is hot, snow white, honey sweet, none of which things need be proved by elaborate argument: it is enough merely to draw attention to them. (For there is a difference, he holds, between formal syllogistic proof of a thing and a mere notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.) Strip mankind of sensation, and nothing remains; it follows that Nature herself is the judge of that which is in accordance with or contrary to nature.

What does Nature perceive or what does she judge of, beside pleasure and pain, to guide her actions of desire and of avoidance? Some members of our school however would refine upon this doctrine; these say that it is not enough for the judgment of good and evil to rest with the senses; the facts that pleasure is in and for itself desirable and pain in and for itself to be avoided can also be grasped by the intellect and the reason. Accordingly they declare that the perception that the one is to be sought after and the other avoided is a notion naturally implanted in our minds. Others again, with whom I agree, observing that a great many philosophers do advance a vast array of reasons to prove why pleasure should not be counted as a good nor pain as an evil, consider that we had better not be too confident of our case; in their view it requires elaborate and reasoned argument, and abstruse theoretical discussion of the nature of pleasure and pain.

X. But I must explain to you how all this mistaken idea of reprobating pleasure and extolling pain arose. To do so, I will give you a complete account of the system, and expound the actual teachings of the great explorer of the truth, the master-builder of human happiness. No one rejects, dislikes or avoids pleasure itself, because it is pleasure, but because those who do not know how to pursue pleasure rationally encounter consequences that are extremely painful. Nor again is there anyone who loves or pursues or desires to obtain pain of itself, because it is pain, but because occasionally circumstances occur in which toil and pain can procure him some great pleasure. To take a trivial example, which of us ever undertakes laborious physical exercise, except to obtain some advantage from it? But who has any right to find fault with a man who chooses to enjoy a pleasure that has no annoying consequences, or one who avoids a pain that produces no resultant pleasure?

On the other hand, we denounce with righteous indignation and dislike men who are so beguiled and demoralized by the charms of the pleasure of the moment, so blinded by desire, that they cannot foresee the pain and trouble that are bound to ensue; and equal blame belongs to those who fail in their duty through weakness of will, which is the same as saying through shrinking from toil and pain. These cases are perfectly simple and easy to distinguish. In a free hour, when our power of choice is untrammelled and when nothing prevents our being able to do what we like best, every pleasure is to be welcomed and every pain avoided.

But in certain emergencies and owing to the claims of duty or the obligations of business it will frequently occur that pleasures have to be repudiated and annoyances accepted. The wise man therefore always holds in these matters to this principle of selection: he rejects pleasures to secure other greater pleasures, or else he endures pains to avoid worse pains.

This being the theory I hold, why need I be afraid of not being able to reconcile it with the case of the Torquati my ancestors? Your references to them just now were historically correct, and also showed your kind and friendly feeling towards myself; but the same I am not to be bribed by your flattery of my family, and you will not find me a less resolute opponent. Tell me, pray, what explanation do you put upon their actions? Do you really believe that they charged an armed enemy, or treated their children, their own flesh and blood, so cruelly, without a thought for their own interest or advantage? Why, even wild animals do not act in that way; they do not run amok so blindly that we cannot discern any purpose in their movements and their onslaughts.

Can you then suppose that those heroic men performed their famous deeds without any motive at all? What their motive was, I will consider later on: for the present I will confidently assert, that if they had a motive for those undoubtedly glorious exploits, that motive was not a love of virtue in and for itself.—He wrested the necklet from his foe.—Yes, and saved himself from death. But he braved great danger.—Yes, before the eyes of an army.—What did he get by it?—Honor and esteem, the strongest guarantees of security in life.—He sentenced his own son to death.—If from no motive, I am sorry to be the descendant of anyone so savage and inhuman; but if his purpose was by inflicting pain upon himself to establish his authority as a commander, and to tighten the reins of discipline during a very serious war by holding over his army the fear of punishment, then his action aimed at ensuring the safety of his fellow citizens, upon which he knew his own depended.

And this is a principle of wide application. People of your school, and especially yourself, who are so diligent a student of history, have found a favorite field for the display of your eloquence in recalling the stories of brave and famous men of old, and in praising their actions, not on utilitarian grounds, but on account of the splendor of abstract moral worth. But all of this falls to the ground if the principle of selection that I have just mentioned be established,—the principle of forgoing pleasures for the purpose of getting greater pleasures, and enduring pains for the sake of escaping greater pains.

XI. But enough has been said at this stage about the glorious exploits and achievements of the heroes of renown. The tendency of all of the virtues to produce pleasure is a topic that will be treated in its own place later on. At present I shall proceed to expound the essence and qualities of pleasure itself, and shall endeavor to remove the misconceptions of ignorance and to make you realize how serious, how temperate, how austere is the school that is supposed to be sensual, lax, and luxurious. The pleasure we pursue is not that kind alone which directly affects our physical being with a delightful feeling,—a positively agreeable perception of the senses; on the contrary, the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced as a result of the complete removal of pain. When we are released from pain, the mere sensation of complete emancipation and relief from uneasiness is in itself a source of gratification.

But everything that causes gratification is a pleasure (just as everything that causes annoyance is a pain). Therefore the complete removal of pain has correctly been termed a pleasure. For example, when hunger and thirst are banished by food and drink, the mere fact of getting rid of uneasiness brings a resultant pleasure in its train. So generally, the removal of pain causes pleasure to take its place.

Epicurus consequently maintained that there is no such thing as a neutral state of feeling intermediate between pleasure and pain; for the state supposed by some thinkers to be neutral, being characterized as it is by entire absence of pain, is itself, he held, a pleasure, and, what is more, a pleasure of the highest order. A man who is conscious of his condition at all must necessarily feel either pleasure or pain.

But complete absence of pain Epicurus considers to be the limit and highest point of pleasure; beyond this point pleasure may vary in kind, but it cannot vary in intensity or degree. Yet at Athens, so my father used to tell me when he wanted to air his wit at the expense of the Stoics, in the Ceramicus there is actually a statue of Chrysippus seated and holding out one hand, the gesture being intended to indicate the delight which he

used to take in the following little syllogism: "Does your hand want anything, while it is in its present condition?" Answer: "No, nothing."—"But if pleasure were a good, it would want pleasure."—"Yes, I suppose it would."—"Therefore pleasure is not a good."

An argument, as my father declared, which not even a statue would employ, if a statue could speak; because though it is cogent enough as an objection to the Cyrenaics, it does not touch Epicurus. For if the only kind of pleasure were that which so to speak tickles the senses, an influence permeating them with a feeling of delight, neither the hand nor any other member could be satisfied with the absence of pain unaccompanied by an agreeable and active sensation of pleasure. Whereas if, as Epicurus holds, the highest pleasure be to feel no pain, Chrysippus's interlocutor, though justified in making his first admission, that his hand in that condition wanted nothing, was not justified in his second admission, that if pleasure were a good, his hand would have wanted it.

And the reason why it would not have wanted pleasure is that to be without pain is to be in a state of pleasure.

XII. The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.

Suppose on the other hand a person crushed beneath the heaviest load of mental and of bodily anguish to which humanity is liable. Grant him no hope of ultimate relief in view also give him no pleasure either present or in prospect. Can one describe or imagine a more pitiable state? If then a life full of pain is the thing most to be avoided, it follows that to live in pain is the highest evil; and this position implies that a life of pleasure is the ultimate good. In fact the mind possesses nothing in itself upon which it can rest as final. Every fear, every sorrow can be traced back to pain; there is no other thing besides pain which is of its own nature capable of causing either anxiety or distress.

Pleasure and pain moreover supply the motives of desire and of avoidance, and the springs of conduct generally. This being so, it clearly follows that actions are right and praiseworthy only as being a means to the attainment of a life of pleasure. But that which is not itself a means to anything else, but to which all else is a means, is what the Greeks term the Telos, the highest, ultimate or final Good. It must therefore be admitted that the Chief Good is to live agreeably.

XIII. Those who place the Chief Good in virtue alone are beguiled by the glamour of a name, and do not understand the true demands of nature. If they will consent to listen to Epicurus, they will be delivered from the grossest error. Your school dilates on the transcendent beauty of the virtues; but were they not productive of pleasure, who would deem them either praiseworthy or desirable? We esteem the art of medicine not for its interest as a science, but for its conduciveness to health; the art of navigation is commended for its practical and not its scientific value, because it conveys the rules for sailing a ship with success. So also Wisdom, which must be considered as the art of living, if it effected no result would not be desired; but as it is, it is desired, because it is the artificer that procures and produces pleasure. (The meaning that I attach to pleasure must by this time be clear to you, and you must not be biased against my argument owing to the discreditable associations of the term.)

The great disturbing factor in a man's life is ignorance of good and evil; mistaken ideas about these frequently rob us of our greatest pleasures, and torment us with the most cruel pain of mind. Hence we need the aid of Wisdom, to rid us of our fears and appetites, to root out all our errors and prejudices, and to serve

as our infallible guide to the attainment of pleasure. Wisdom alone can banish sorrow from our hearts and protect its front alarm and apprehension; put yourself to school with her, and you may live in peace, and quench the glowing flames of desire. For the desires are incapable of satisfaction; they ruin not individuals only but whole families, nay often shake the very foundations of the state. It is they that are the source of hatred, quarreling, and strife, of sedition and of war.

Nor do they only flaunt themselves abroad, or turn their blind onslaughts solely against others; even when prisoned within the heart they quarrel and fall out among themselves; and this cannot but render the whole of life embittered. Hence only the Wise Man, who prunes away all the rank growth of vanity and error, can possibly live untroubled by sorrow and by fear, content within the bounds that nature has set. Nothing could be more useful or more conducive to well-being than Epicurus's doctrine as to the different classes of the desires. One kind he classified as both natural and necessary, a second as natural without being necessary, and a third as neither natural nor necessary; the principle of classification being that the necessary desires are gratified with little trouble or expense; the natural desires also require but little, since nature's own riches, which suffice to content her, are both easily procured and limited in amount; but for the imaginary desires no bound or limit can be discovered.

XIV. If then we observe that ignorance and error reduce the whole of life to confusion, while Wisdom alone is able to protect us from the onslaughts of appetite and the menaces of fear, teaching us to bear even the affronts of fortune with moderation, and showing us all the paths that lead to calmness and to peace, why should we hesitate to avow that Wisdom is to be desired for the sake of the pleasures it brings and Folly to be avoided because of its injurious consequences?

The same principle will lead us to pronounce that Temperance also is not desirable for its own sake, but because it bestows peace of mind, and soothes the heart with a tranquilizing sense of harmony. For it is temperance that warns us to be guided by reason in what we desire and avoid. Nor is it enough to judge what it is right to do or to leave undone; we also need to abide by our judgment. Most men however lack tenacity of purpose; their resolution weakens and succumbs as soon as the fair form of pleasure meets their gaze, and they surrender themselves prisoners to their passions, failing to foresee the inevitable result. Thus for the sake of a pleasure at once small in amount and unnecessary, and one which they might have procured by other means or even denied themselves altogether without pain, they incur serious disease, or loss of fortune, or disgrace, and not infrequently become liable to the penalties of the law and of the courts of justice.

Those on the other hand who are resolved so to enjoy their pleasures as to avoid all painful consequences therefrom, and who retain their faculty of judgment and avoid being seduced by pleasure into courses that they perceive to be wrong, reap the very highest pleasure by forgoing pleasure. Similarly also they often voluntarily endure pain, to avoid incurring greater pain by not doing so. This clearly proves that Intemperance is not undesirable for its own sake, while Temperance is desirable not because it renounces pleasures, but because it procures greater pleasures.

XV. The same account will be found to hold good of Courage. The performance of labors, the undergoing of pains, are not in themselves attractive, nor are endurance, industry, watchfulness, nor yet that much lauded virtue, perseverance, nor even courage; but we aim at these virtues in order to live without anxiety and fear and so far as possible to be free from pain of mind and body. The fear of death plays havoc with the calm and even tenor of life, and to bow the head to pain and bear it abjectly and feebly is a pitiable thing; such weakness has caused many men to betray their parents or their friends, some their country, and very many utterly to ruin themselves. So on the other hand a strong and lofty spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow.

It makes light of death, for the dead are only as they were before they were born. It is schooled to encounter pain by recollecting that pains of great severity are ended by death, and slight ones have frequent intervals of respite; while those of medium intensity lie within our own control: we can bear them if they are endurable, or if they are not, we may serenely quit life's theater, when the play has ceased to please us. These considerations prove that timidity and cowardice are not blamed, nor courage and endurance praised, on their own account; the former are rejected because they beget pain, the latter coveted because they beget

pleasure.

XVI. It remains to speak of Justice, to complete the list of the virtues; but this admits of practically the same treatment as the others. Wisdom, Temperance, and Courage I have shown to be so closely linked with Pleasure that they cannot possibly be severed or sundered from it. The same must be deemed to be the case with Justice. Not only does Justice never cause anyone harm, but on the contrary it always adds some benefit, partly owing to its essentially tranquilizing influence upon the mind, partly because of the hope that it warrants of a never-failing supply of the things that uncorrupted nature really needs. And just as Rashness, License, and Cowardice ever torment the mind, ever awakening trouble and discord, so Unrighteousness, when firmly rooted in the heart, causes restlessness by the mere fact of its presence; and if once it has found expression in some deed of wickedness, however secret the act, yet it can never feel assured that it will always remain undetected.

The usual consequences of crime are, first suspicion, next gossip and rumor, then comes the accuser, then the judge; many wrongdoers have even turned evidence against themselves, as happened in your consulship. And even if any think themselves well fenced and fortified against detection by their fellow men, they still dread the eye of heaven, and fancy that the pangs of anxiety night and day gnawing at their hearts are sent by Providence to punish them. But what can wickedness contribute towards lessening the annoyances of life, commensurate with its effect in increasing them, owing to the burden of a guilty conscience, the penalties of the law and the hatred of one's fellows?

Yet nevertheless some men indulge without limit their avarice, ambition and love of power, lust, gluttony and those other desires, which ill-gotten gains can never diminish but rather must inflame the more; inasmuch that they appear proper subjects for restraint rather than for reformation. Men of sound natures, therefore, are summoned by the voice of true reason to justice, equity, and honesty. For one without eloquence or resources dishonesty is not good policy, since it is difficult for such a man to succeed in his designs, or to make good his success when once achieved.

On the other hand, for the rich and clever generous conduct seems more in keeping, and liberality wins them affection and good will, the surest means to a life of peace; especially as there really is no motive for transgressing since the desires that spring from nature are easily gratified without doing any man wrong, while those that are imaginary ought to be resisted, for they set their affections upon nothing that is really wanted; while there is more loss inherent in Injustice itself than there is profit in the gains it brings.

Hence Justice also cannot correctly be said to be desirable in and for itself; it is so because it is so highly productive of gratification. For esteem and affection are gratifying, because they render life safer and fuller of pleasure. Hence we hold that Unrighteousness is to be avoided not simply on account of the disadvantages that result from being unrighteous, but even far more because when it dwells in a man's heart it never suffers him to breathe freely or know a moment's rest.

If then even the glory of the Virtues, on which all the other philosophers love to expatiate so eloquently, has in the last resort no meaning unless it be based on pleasure, whereas pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring, it cannot be doubted that pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure.

XVII. The doctrine thus firmly established has corollaries which I will briefly expound.

(1) The Ends of Goods and Evils themselves, that is, pleasure and pain, are not open to mistake; where people go wrong is in not knowing what things are productive of pleasure and pain.

(2) Again, we aver that mental pleasures and pains arise out of bodily ones (and therefore I allow your contention that any Epicureans who think otherwise put themselves out of court; and I am aware that many do, though not those who can speak with authority); but although men do experience mental pleasure that is agreeable and mental pain that is annoying, yet both of these we assert arise out of and are based upon bodily sensations.

(3) Yet we maintain that this does not preclude mental pleasures and pains from being much more intense than those of the body; since the body can feel only what is present to it at the moment, whereas the mind is also cognizant of the past and of the future. For granting that pain of body is equally painful, yet our sensation of pain can be enormously increased by the belief that some evil of unlimited magnitude and duration threatens to befall us hereafter. And the same consideration may be transferred to pleasure: a pleasure is greater if not accompanied by any apprehension of evil. This therefore clearly appears, that intense mental pleasure or distress contributes more to our happiness or misery than a bodily pleasure or pain of equal duration.

(4) But we do not agree that when pleasure is withdrawn uneasiness at once ensues, unless the pleasure happens to have been replaced by a pain: while on the other hand one is glad to lose a pain even though no active sensation of pleasure comes in its place: a fact that serves to show how great a pleasure is the mere absence of pain.

(5) But just as we are elated by the anticipation of good things, so we are delighted by their recollection. Fools are tormented by the memory of former evils; wise men have the delight of renewing in grateful remembrance the blessings of the past. We have the power both to obliterate our misfortunes in an almost perpetual forgetfulness and to summon up pleasant and agreeable memories of our successes. But when we fix our mental vision closely on the events of the past, then sorrow or gladness ensues according as these were evil or good.

XVIII. Here is indeed a royal road to happiness—open, simple, and direct! For clearly man can have no greater good than complete freedom from pain and sorrow coupled with the enjoyment of the highest bodily and mental pleasures. Notice then how the theory embraces every possible enhancement of life, every aid to the attainment of that Chief Good which is our object. Epicurus, the man whom you denounce as a voluptuary, cries aloud that no one can live pleasantly without living wisely, honorably, and justly, and no one wisely, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly. For a city rent by faction cannot prosper, nor a house whose masters are at strife; much less then can a mind divided against itself and filled with inward discord taste any particle of pure and liberal pleasure. But one who is perpetually swayed by conflicting and incompatible counsels and desires can know no peace or calm.

Why, if the pleasantness of life is diminished by the more serious bodily diseases, how much more must it be diminished by the diseases of the mind! But extravagant and imaginary desires, for riches, fame, power, and also for licentious pleasures, are nothing but mental diseases. Then, too, there are grief, trouble and sorrow, which gnaw the heart and consume it with anxiety, if men fail to realize that the mind need feel no pain unconnected with some pain of body, present or to come. Yet there is no foolish man but is afflicted by some one of these diseases; therefore there is no foolish man that is not unhappy.

Moreover, there is death, the stone of Tantalus ever hanging over men's heads; and superstition, that poisons and destroys all peace of mind. Besides, they do not recollect their past nor enjoy their present blessings; they merely look forward to those of the future, and as these are of necessity uncertain, they are consumed with agony and terror; and the climax of their torment is when they perceive too late that all their dreams of wealth or station, power or fame, have come to nothing. For they never attain any of the pleasures, the hope of which inspired them to undergo all their arduous toils. Or look again at others, petty, narrow-minded men, or confirmed pessimists, or spiteful, envious, ill-tempered creatures, unsociable, abusive, brutal; others again enslaved to the follies of love, impudent or reckless, wanton, headstrong and yet irresolute, always changing their minds. Such failings render their lives one unbroken round of misery.

The conclusion is that no foolish man can be happy, nor any wise man fail to be happy. This is a truth that we establish far more conclusively than do the Stoics. For they maintain that nothing is good save that vague phantom which they entitle Moral Worth, a title more splendid than substantial; and say that Virtue resting on this Moral Worth has no need of pleasure, but is herself her own sufficient happiness.

XIX. At the same time this Stoic doctrine can be stated in a form which we do not object to, and indeed ourselves endorse. For Epicurus thus presents his Wise Man who is always happy: his desires are kept

within bounds; death he disregards; he has a true conception, untainted by fear, of the Divine nature; he does not hesitate to depart from life, if that would better his condition. Thus equipped he enjoys perpetual pleasure, for there is no moment when the pleasures he experiences do not outbalance the pains; since he remembers the past with gratitude, grasps the present with a full realization of its pleasantness, and does not rely upon the future; he looks forward to it, but finds his true enjoyment in the present. Also he is entirely free from the vices that I instanced a few moments ago, and he derives no inconsiderable pleasure from comparing his own existence with the life of the foolish.

Moreover, any pains that the Wise Man may encounter are never so severe but that he has more cause for gladness than for sorrow. Again, it is a fine saying of Epicurus that “the Wise Man is but little interfered with by fortune: the great concerns of life, the things that matter, are controlled by his own wisdom and reason”; and that “no greater pleasure could be derived from a life of infinite duration than is actually afforded by this existence which we know to be finite.” Logic, on which your school lays such stress, he held to be of no effect either as a guide to conduct or as an aid to thought.

Natural Philosophy he deemed all-important. This science explains to us the meaning of terms, the nature of predication, and the law of consistency and contradiction; secondly, a thorough knowledge of the facts of nature relieves us of the burden of superstition, frees us from fear of death, and shields us against the disturbing effects of ignorance, which is often in itself a cause of terrifying apprehensions; lastly, to learn what nature's real requirements are improves the moral character also. Besides, it is only by firmly grasping a well-established scientific system, observing the Rule or Canon that has fallen as it were from heaven so that all men may know it—only by making that Canon the test of all our judgments, that we can hope always to stand fast in our belief, unshaken by the eloquence of any man.

On the other hand, without a full understanding of the world of nature it is impossible to maintain the truth of our sense-perceptions. Further, every mental presentation has its origin in sensation: so that no certain knowledge will be possible, unless [all sensations are true](#), as the theory of Epicurus teaches that they are. Those who deny the validity of sensation and say that nothing can be perceived, having excluded the evidence of the senses, are unable even to expound their own argument. Besides, by abolishing knowledge and science they abolish all possibility of rational life and action. Thus Natural Philosophy supplies courage to face the fear of death; resolution to resist the terrors of religion; peace of mind, for it removes all ignorance of the mysteries of nature; self-control, for it explains the nature of the desires and distinguishes their different kinds; and, as I showed just now, the Canon or Criterion of Knowledge, which Epicurus also established, gives a method of discerning truth from falsehood.

XX. There remains a topic that is pre-eminently germane to this discussion, I mean the subject of Friendship. Your school maintains that if pleasure be the Chief Good, friendship will cease to exist. Now Epicurus's pronouncement about friendship is that of all the means to happiness that wisdom has devised, none is greater, none more fruitful, none more delightful than this. Nor did he only commend this doctrine by his eloquence, but far more by the example of his life and conduct. How great a thing such friendship is, is shown by the mythical stories of antiquity. Review the legends from the remotest ages, and, copious and varied as they are, you will barely find in them three pairs of friends, beginning with Theseus and ending with Orestes. Yet Epicurus in a single house and that a small one maintained a whole company of friends, united by the closest sympathy and affection; and this still goes on in the Epicurean school.

But to return to our subject, for there is no need of personal instances: I notice that the topic of friendship has been treated by Epicureans in three ways:

(1) Some have denied that pleasures affecting our friends are in themselves to be desired by us in the same degree as we desire our own pleasures. This doctrine is thought by some critics to undermine the foundations of friendship; however, its supporters defend their position, and in my opinion have no difficulty in making good their ground. They argue that friendship can no more be sundered from pleasure than can the virtues, which we have discussed already. A solitary, friendless life must be beset by secret dangers and alarms. Hence reason itself advises the acquisition of friends; their possession gives confidence, and a firmly rooted hope of winning pleasure. And just as hatred, jealousy, and contempt are hindrances to pleasure, so

friendship is the most trustworthy preserver and also creator of pleasure alike for our friends and for ourselves. It affords us enjoyment in the present, and it inspires us with hopes for the near and distant future.

Thus it is not possible to secure uninterrupted gratification in life without friendship, nor yet to preserve friendship itself unless we love our friends as much as ourselves. Hence this unselfishness does occur in friendship, while also friendship is closely linked with pleasure. For we rejoice in our friends' joy as much as in our own, and are equally pained by their sorrows. Therefore the Wise Man will feel exactly the same towards his friend as he does towards himself, and will exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as he would for his own. All that has been said about the essential connection of the virtues with pleasure must be repeated about friendship. Epicurus well said (I give almost his exact words): "The same creed that has given us courage to overcome all fear of everlasting or long-enduring evil hereafter, has discerned that friendship is our strongest safeguard in this present term of life."

(2) Other Epicureans though by no means lacking in insight are a little less courageous in defying the opprobrious criticisms of the Academy. They fear that if we hold friendship to be desirable only for the pleasure that it affords to ourselves, it will be thought that it is crippled altogether. They therefore say that the first advances and overtures, and the original inclination to form an attachment, are prompted by the desire for pleasure, but that when the progress of intercourse has led to intimacy, the relationship blossoms into an affection strong enough to make us love our friends for their own sake, even though no practical advantage accrues from their friendship. Does not familiarity endear to us localities, temples, cities, gymnasia, and playing-grounds, horses and hounds, gladiatorial shows and fights with wild beasts, then how much more natural and reasonable that this should be able to happen in our intercourse with our fellow-men!

(3) The third view is that wise men have made a sort of compact to love their friends no less than themselves. We can understand the possibility of this, and we often see it happen. Clearly no more effective means to happiness could be found than such an alliance.

All these considerations go to prove not only that the theory of friendship is not embarrassed by the identification of the Chief Good with pleasure, but also that without this no foundation for friendship whatsoever can be found.

XXI. If then the doctrine I have set forth is clearer and more luminous than daylight itself; if it is derived entirely from Nature's source; if my whole discourse relies throughout for confirmation on the unbiased and unimpeachable evidence of the senses; if lisping infants, nay even dumb animals, prompted by Nature's teaching, almost find voice to proclaim that there is no welfare but pleasure, no hardship but pain—and their judgment in these matters is neither sophisticated nor biased—ought we not to feel the greatest gratitude to him who caught this utterance of Nature's voice, and grasped its import so firmly and so fully that he has guided all sane-minded men into the paths of peace and happiness, calmness and repose?

You are pleased to think him uneducated. The reason is that he refused to consider any education worth the name that did not help to school us in happiness. Was he to spend his time, as you encourage Triarius and me to do, in perusing poets, who give us nothing solid and useful, but merely childish amusement? Was he to occupy himself like Plato with music and geometry, arithmetic and astronomy, which starting from false premises cannot be true, and which moreover if they were true would contribute nothing to make our lives pleasanter and therefore better? Was he, I say, to study arts like these, and neglect the master art, so difficult and correspondingly so fruitful, the art of living?

No! Epicurus was not uneducated: the real philistines are those who ask us to go on studying till old age the subjects that we ought to be ashamed not to have learnt in boyhood.

3. LacusCurtius Version of Rackham with Line Numbers 1931

5 13 To begin with what is easiest, let us first pass p17 in review the system of Epicurus, which to most men is the best known of any. Our exposition of it, as you shall see, will be as accurate as any usually given even by the professed adherents of his school. For our object is to discover the truth, not to refute someone as an opponent.

An elaborate defence of the hedonistic theory of Epicurus was once delivered by Lucius Torquatus, a student well versed in all the systems of philosophy; to him I replied, and Gaius Triarius, a youth of remarkable learning and seriousness of character, assisted at the discussion. 14 Both of these gentlemen had called to pay me their respects at my place at Cumae. We first exchanged a few remarks about literature, of which both were enthusiastic students. Then Torquatus said, "As we have for once found you at leisure, I am resolved to hear the reason why you regard my master Epicurus, not indeed with hatred, as those who do not share his views mostly do, but at all events with disapproval. I myself consider him as the one person who had discerned the truth, and who has delivered men from the gravest errors and imparted to them all there is to know about well-being and happiness. The fact is, I think that you are like our friend Triarius, and dislike Epicurus because he has neglected the graces of style that you find in your Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus. For I can scarcely bring myself to believe that you think his opinions untrue." 15 "Let me assure you, Torquatus," said I, "that you are entirely mistaken. With your master's style I have no fault to find. He expresses his meaning adequately, and gives me a plain intelligible statement. Not that I despise eloquence in a philosopher if he has it to offer, but p19 I should not greatly insist on it if he has not. But his matter I do not find so satisfactory, and that in more points than one. However, 'many men, many minds':5 so it is possible that I am mistaken." "What is it, pray," he said, "to which you take exception? For I recognize you as a just critic, provided you really know what his doctrines are." 16 "Oh," said I, "I know the whole of Epicurus's opinions well enough, — unless you think that Phaedrus or Zeno did not tell me the truth. I have heard both of them lecture, though to be sure they convinced me of nothing but their own devotion to the system. Indeed I regularly attended those professors, in company with our friend Atticus, who for his part had an admiration for them both, and a positive affection for Phaedrus. Every day we used to discuss together in private what we had heard at lecture, and there was never any dispute as to what I could understand; the question was, what I could accept as true."

6 17 "Well then, what is the point?" said he; "I should very much like to know what it is that you disagree with." "Let me begin," I replied, "with the subject of Natural Philosophy, which is Epicurus's particular boast. Here, in the first place, he is entirely second-hand. His doctrines are those of Democritus, with a very few modifications. And as for the latter, where he attempts to improve upon his original, in my opinion he only succeeds in making things worse. Democritus believes in certain things which he terms 'atoms,' that is, bodies so solid as to be indivisible, moving about in a vacuum of infinite extent, which has neither top, bottom nor middle, neither centre nor circumference. The motion of these atoms is such that they collide and so cohere together; and from p21 this process result the whole of the things that exist and that we see. Moreover, this movement of the atoms must not be conceived as starting from a beginning, but as having gone on from all eternity. 18 Epicurus for his part, where he follows Democritus, does not generally blunder. Still, there is a great deal in each of them with which I do not agree, and especially this: in the study of Nature there are two questions to be asked, first, what is the matter out of which each thing is made, second, what is the force by which it is made; now Democritus and Epicurus have discussed the question of matter, but they have not considered the question of force or the efficient cause. But this is a defect shared by both; I now come to the lapses peculiar to Epicurus. He believes that these same indivisible solid bodies are borne by their own weight perpendicularly downward, which he holds is the natural motion of all bodies; 19 but thereupon this clever fellow, being met with the difficulty that if they all travelled downwards in a straight line, and, as I said, perpendicularly, no one atom would ever be able to overtake any other atom, accordingly introduced an idea of his own invention: he said that the atom makes a very tiny swerve, — the smallest divergence possible; and so are produced entanglements and combinations and cohesions of atoms with atoms, which result in the creation of the world and all its parts, and of all that in them is. Now not only is the whole of this affair a piece of childish fancy, but it does not even achieve the result that its author desires. The swerving is itself an arbitrary fiction; for Epicurus says the atoms swerve without a cause, — yet this is the capital offence in a natural philosopher, to speak of something p23 taking place uncaused. Then also he gratuitously deprives the atoms of what he himself declared to be the natural motion of all heavy bodies,

namely, movement in a straight line downwards, and yet he does not attain the object for the sake of which this fiction was devised. 20 For, if all the atoms swerve, none will ever come to cohere together; or if some swerve while others travel in a straight line, by their own natural tendency, in the first place this will be tantamount to assigning to the atoms their different spheres of action, some to travel straight and some sideways; while secondly (and this is a weak point with Democritus also) this riotous hurly-burly of atoms could not possibly result in the ordered beauty of the world we know. It is also unworthy of a natural philosopher to deny the infinite divisibility of matter; an error that assuredly Epicurus would have avoided, if he had been willing to let his friend Polyaenus teach him geometry instead of making Polyaenus himself unlearn it. Democritus, being an educated man and well versed in geometry, thinks the sun is of vast size; Epicurus considers it perhaps a foot in diameter, for he pronounces it to be exactly as large as it appears, or a little larger or smaller. 21 Thus where Epicurus alters the doctrines of Democritus, he alters them for the worse; while for those ideas which he adopts, the credit belongs entirely to Democritus, — the atoms, the void, the images,⁶ or as they call them, eidola, whose impact is the cause not only of vision but also of thought; the very conception of infinite space, apeiria as they term it, is entirely derived from Democritus; and again the countless numbers of worlds that come into existence and pass out of existence every day. For my own part I reject these doctrines altogether; but still I could wish that Democritus, whom every one else applauds, had not been vilified by Epicurus who took him as his sole guide.

7 22 "Turn next to the second division of philosophy, the department of Method and of Dialectic, which is termed Logik?. Of the whole armour of Logic your founder, as it seems to me, is absolutely destitute. He does away with Definition; he has no doctrine of Division or Partition;⁷ he gives no rules for Deduction or Syllogistic Inference, and imparts no method for resolving dilemmas or for detecting Fallacies of Equivocation. The Criteria of reality he places in sensation; once let the senses accept something as true that is false, and every possible criterion of truth and falsehood seems to him to be immediately destroyed. . . .

23 . . .⁸ He lays the very greatest stress upon that which, as he declares, Nature herself decrees and sanctions, that is the feelings of pleasure and pain. These he maintains lie at the root of every act of choice and of avoidance. This is the doctrine of Aristippus, and it is upheld more cogently and more frankly by the Cyrenaics; but nevertheless it is in my judgment a doctrine in the last degree unworthy of the dignity of man. Nature, in my own opinion at all events, has created and endowed us for higher ends. I may possibly be mistaken; but I am absolutely convinced that the Torquatus who first won that surname did not wrest the famous necklet from his foe in the hope of getting from it any physical enjoyment, nor did he fight the battle of the Veseris against the Latins in this third consulship for the sake of pleasure. Indeed in sentencing his son to be beheaded, it would seem that he actually deprived himself of a great deal of pleasure; for he sacrificed his natural instincts of paternal affection to the claims of state and of his military office.

24 "Then, think of the Titus Torquatus who was consul with Gnaeus Octavius; when he dealt so sternly with the son who had passed out of his paternal control through his adoption by Decius Silanus — when he summoned him into his presence to answer to the charge preferred against him by a deputation from Macedonia, of accepting bribes while prisoner in that province — when, after hearing both sides of the case, he gave judgment that he found his son guilty of having conducted himself in office in a manner unworthy of his ancestry, and banished him for ever from his sight, — think you he had any regard for his own pleasure? But I pass over the dangers, the toils, the actual pain that all good men endure for country and for friends, not only not seeking pleasure, but actually renouncing pleasures altogether, and preferring to undergo every sort of pain rather than be false to any portion of their duty. Let us turn to matters seemingly less important, but equally conclusive. 25 What actual pleasure do you, Torquatus, or does Triarius here, derive from literature, from history and learning, from turning the pages of the poets and committing vast quantities of verse to memory? Do not tell me that these pursuits are in themselves a pleasure to you, and that so were the deeds I mentioned to the Torquati. That line of defence was never taken by Epicurus or Metrodorus, nor by any one of them if he possessed any intelligence or had mastered the doctrines of your school. p29 Again, as to the question often asked, why so many men are Epicureans, though it is not the only reason, the thing that most attracts the crowd is the belief that Epicurus declares right conduct and moral worth to be intrinsically and of themselves delightful, which means productive of pleasure. These worthy people do not realize that, if this is true, it upsets the theory altogether. If it were admitted that goodness is spontaneously and intrinsically

pleasant, even without any reference to bodily feeling, then virtue would be desirable for its own sake, and so also would knowledge; but this Epicurus by no means allows.

26 "These then," said I, "are the doctrines of Epicurus that I cannot accept. For the rest, I could desire that he himself had been better equipped with learning (since even you must recognize that he is deficient in that liberal culture which confers on its possessor the title of an educated man) or at all events that he had not deterred others from study. Although I am aware that he has not succeeded in deterring you."

8 I had spoken rather with the intention of drawing out Torquatus than of delivering a discourse of my own. But Triarius interposed, with a smile: "Why, you have practically expelled Epicurus altogether from the philosophic choir. What have you left to him except that, whatever his style may be, you find his meaning intelligible? His doctrines in Natural Philosophy were second-hand, and in your opinion unsound at that; and his attempts to improve on his authority only made things worse. Dialectic he had none. His identification of the Chief Good with pleasure in the first place was in itself an error, and secondly this also was not original; for it p31 had been said before, and said better, by Aristippus. To crown all you added that Epicurus was a person of no education." 27 "Well, Triarius," I rejoined, "when one disagrees with a man, it is essential to say what it is that one objects to in his views. What should prevent me from being an Epicurean, if I accepted the doctrines of Epicurus? especially as the system is an exceedingly easy one to master. You must not find fault with members of opposing schools for criticizing each other's opinions; though I always feel that insult and abuse, or ill-tempered wrangling and bitter, obstinate controversy are beneath the dignity of philosophy." 28 "I am quite of your mind," said Torquatus; "it is impossible to debate without criticizing, but it is equally impossible to debate properly with ill-temper or obstinacy. But I have something I should like to say in reply to all this, if it will not weary you." "Do you suppose," said I, "that I should have said what I have, unless I wanted to hear you?" "Then would you like me to make a rapid review of the whole of Epicurus's system, or to discuss the single topic of pleasure, which is the one main subject of dispute?" "Oh," I said, "that must be for you to decide." "Very well then," said he, "this is what I will do, I will expound a single topic, and that the most important. Natural Philosophy we will postpone; though I will undertake to prove to you both your swerve of the atoms and size of the sun, and also that very many errors of Democritus were criticized and corrected by Epicurus. But on the present occasion I will speak about pleasure; not that I have anything original to contribute, yet I am confident that what I say will command even your acceptance." "Be assured," I said, p33 "that I shall not be obstinate, but will gladly own myself convinced if you can prove your case to my satisfaction." 29 "I shall do so," he rejoined, "provided you are as fair-minded as you promise. But I prefer to employ continuous discourse rather than question and answer." "As you please," said I. So he began.

9 "I will start then," he said, "in the manner approved by the author of the system himself, by settling what are the essence and qualities of the thing that is the object of our inquiry; not that I suppose you to be ignorant of it, but because this is the logical method of procedure. We are inquiring, then, what is the final and ultimate Good, which as all philosophers are agreed must be of such a nature as to be the end to which all other things are means, while it is not itself a means to anything else. This Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the Chief Good, pain the Chief Evil. 30 This he sets out to prove as follows: every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil, and so far as possible avoids it. This it does as long as it remains unperverted, at the prompting of Nature's own unbiased and honest verdict. Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to prove that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided. These facts, he thinks, are perceived by the senses, as that fire is hot, snow white, honey sweet, none of which things need be proved by elaborate argument: it is enough merely to draw attention to them. (For there is a difference, he holds, between formal syllogistic proof of a thing and a mere notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse p35 and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.) Strip mankind of sensation, and nothing remains; it follows that Nature herself is the judge of that which is in accordance with or contrary to nature. What does Nature perceive or what does she judge of, beside pleasure and pain, to guide her actions of desire and of avoidance? 31 Some members of our school however would refine upon this doctrine; these say that it is not enough for the judgment of good and evil to rest with the senses; the facts that pleasure is in and for itself desirable and pain in and for itself to be avoided can also be grasped by the intellect and the reason. Accordingly they declare that the perception that

the one is to be sought after and the other avoided is a notion naturally implanted in our minds. Others again, with whom I agree, observing that a great many philosophers do advance a vast array of reasons to prove why pleasure should not be counted as a good nor pain as an evil, consider that we had better not be too confident of our case; in their view it requires elaborate and reasoned argument, and abstruse theoretical discussion of the nature of pleasure and pain.

10 32 "But I must explain to you how all this mistaken idea of reprobating pleasure and extolling pain arose. To do so, I will give you a complete account of the system, and expound the actual teachings of the great explorer of truth, the master-builder of human happiness. No one rejects, dislikes or avoids pleasure itself, because it is pleasure, but because those who do not know how to pursue pleasure rationally encounter consequences that are extremely painful. Nor again is there anyone who loves or pursues or desires to obtain pain of itself, because it is pain, but because occasionally circumstances occur in which toil and pain can procure him some great pleasure. To take a trivial example, which of us ever undertakes laborious physical exercise, except to obtain some advantage from it? But who has any right to find fault with a man who chooses to enjoy a pleasure that has no annoying consequences, or one who avoids a pain that produces no resultant pleasure? 33 On the other hand, we denounce with righteous indignation and dislike men who are so beguiled and demoralized by the charms of the pleasure of the moment, so blinded by desire, that they cannot foresee the pain and trouble that are bound to ensue; and equal blame belongs to those who fail in their duty through weakness of will, which is the same as saying through shrinking from toil and pain. These cases are perfectly simple and easy to distinguish. In a free hour, when our power of choice is untrammelled and when nothing prevents our being able to do what we like best, every pleasure is to be welcomed and every pain avoided. But in certain emergencies and owing to the claims of duty or the obligations of business it will frequently occur that pleasures have to be repudiated and annoyances accepted. The wise man therefore always holds in these matters to this principle of selection: he rejects pleasures to secure other greater pleasures, or else he endures pains to avoid worse pains.

34 "This being the theory I hold, why need I be afraid of not being able to reconcile it with the case of the Torquati my ancestors? Your references to them just now were historically correct, and also showed your kind and friendly feeling towards myself; but p39 all the same I am not to be bribed by your flattery of my family, and you will not find me a less resolute opponent. Tell me, pray, what explanation do you put upon their actions? Do you really believe that they charged an armed enemy, or treated their children, their own flesh and blood, so cruelly, without a thought for their own interest or advantage? Why, even wild animals do not act in that way; they do not run amok so blindly that we cannot discern any purpose in their movements and their onslaughts. Can you then suppose that those heroic men performed their famous deeds without any motive at all? 35 What their motive was, I will consider later on: for the present I will confidently assert, that if they had a motive for those undoubtedly glorious exploits, that motive was not a love of virtue in and for itself. — He wrested the necklet from his foe. — Yes, and saved himself from death. — But he braved great danger. — Yes, before the eyes of an army. — What did he get by it? — Honour and esteem, the strongest guarantees of security in life. — He sentenced his own son to death. — If from no motive, I am sorry to be the descendant of anyone so savage and inhuman; but if his purpose was by inflicting pain upon himself to establish his authority as a commander, and to tighten the reins of discipline during a very serious war by holding over his army the fear of punishment, then his action aimed at ensuring the safety of his fellow-citizens, upon which he knew his own depended. 36 And this is a principle of wide application. People of your school, and especially yourself, who are so diligent a student of history, have found a favourite field for the display of your eloquence in p41 recalling the stories of brave and famous men of old, and in praising their actions, not on utilitarian grounds, but on account of the splendour of abstract moral worth. But all of this falls to the ground if the principle of selection that I have just mentioned be established, — the principle of forgoing pleasures for the purpose of getting greater pleasures, and enduring pains for the sake of escaping greater pains.

11 37 "But enough has been said at this stage about the glorious exploits and achievements of the heroes of renown. The tendency of all the virtues to produce pleasure is a topic that will be treated in its own place later on. At present I shall proceed to expound the essence and qualities of pleasure itself, and shall endeavour to remove the misconceptions of ignorance and to make you realize how serious, how temperate, how austere

is the school that is supposed to be sensual, lax and luxurious. The pleasure we pursue is not that kind alone which directly affects our physical being with a delightful feeling, — a positively agreeable perception of the senses; on the contrary, the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced as a result of the complete removal of pain. When we are released from pain, the mere sensation of complete emancipation and relief from uneasiness is in itself a source of gratification. But everything that causes gratification is a pleasure (just as everything that causes annoyance is a pain). Therefore the complete removal of pain has correctly been termed a pleasure. For example, when hunger and thirst are banished by food and drink, the mere fact of getting rid of uneasiness brings a resultant pleasure in its train. So generally, the removal of pain causes pleasure to take its place. 38 Epicurus consequently maintained that there is no such thing as a neutral state of feeling intermediate between pleasure and pain; for the state supposed by some thinkers to be neutral, being characterized as it is by entire absence of pain, is itself, he held, a pleasure, and, what is more, a pleasure of the highest order. A man who is conscious of his condition at all must necessarily feel pleasure or pain. But complete absence of pain Epicurus considers to be the limit and highest point of pleasure; beyond this point pleasure may vary in kind, but it cannot vary in intensity or degree. 39 Yet at Athens, so my father used to tell me when he wanted to air his wit at the expense of the Stoics, in the Ceramicus there is actually a statue of Chrysippus seated and holding out one hand, the gesture being intended to indicate the delight which he used to take in the following little syllogism: 'Does your hand want anything, while it is in its present condition?' Answer: 'No, nothing.' — 'But if pleasure were a good, it would want pleasure.' — 'Yes, I suppose it would.' — 'Therefore pleasure is not a good.' An argument, as my father declared, which not even a statue would employ, if a statue could speak; because though it is cogent enough as an objection to the Cyrenaics, it does not touch Epicurus. For if the only kind of pleasure were that which so to speak tickles the senses, an influence permeating them with a feeling of delight, neither the hand nor any other member could be satisfied with the absence of pain unaccompanied by an agreeable and active sensation of pleasure. Whereas if, as Epicurus holds, the highest pleasure be to feel no pain, Chrysippus' interlocutor, though justified in making his first admission, that his hand in that condition wanted nothing, was not justified in his second admission, that if pleasure were a good, his hand would have wanted it. And the reason why it would not have wanted pleasure is, that to be without pain is to be in a state of pleasure.

12 40 "The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. 41 Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, — and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement. Suppose on the other hand a person crushed beneath the heaviest load of mental and of bodily anguish to which humanity is liable. Grant him no hope of ultimate relief in view; also give him no pleasure either present or in prospect. Can one describe or imagine a more pitiable state? If then a life full of pain is the thing most to be avoided, it follows that to live in pain is the highest evil; and this position implies that a life of pleasure is the ultimate good. In fact the mind possesses nothing in itself upon which it can rest as final. Every fear, every sorrow can be traced back to pain; there is no other thing besides pain which is of its own nature capable of causing either anxiety or distress.

42 "Pleasure and pain moreover supply the motives of desire and of avoidance, and the springs of conduct generally. This being so, it clearly follows that actions are right and praiseworthy only as being a means to the attainment of a life of pleasure. But that which is not itself a means to anything else, but to which all else is a means, is what the Greeks term the Telos, the highest, ultimate or final Good. It must therefore be admitted that the Chief Good is to live agreeably.

13 "Those who place the Chief Good in virtue alone are beguiled by the glamour of a name, and do not understand the true demands of nature. If they will consent to listen to Epicurus, they will be delivered from the grossest error. Your school dilates on the transcendent beauty of the virtues; but were they not productive

of pleasure, who would deem them either praiseworthy or desirable? We esteem the art of medicine not for its interest as a science but for its conduciveness to health; the art of navigation is commended for its practical and not its scientific value, because it conveys the rules for sailing a ship with success. So also Wisdom, which must be considered as the art of living, if it effected no result would not be desired; but as it is, it is desired, because it is the artificer that procures and produces pleasure. 43 (The meaning that I attach to pleasure must by this time be clear to you, and you must not be biased against my argument p49 owing to the discreditable associations of the term.) The great disturbing factor in man's life is ignorance of good and evil; mistaken ideas about these frequently rob us of our greatest pleasures, and torment us with the most cruel pain of mind. Hence we need the aid of Wisdom, to rid us of our fears and appetites, to root out all our errors and prejudices, and to serve as our infallible guide to the attainment of pleasure. Wisdom alone can banish sorrow from our hearts and protect us from alarm and apprehension; put yourself to school with her, and you may live in peace, and quench the glowing flames of desire. For the desires are incapable of satisfaction; they ruin not individuals only but whole families, nay often shake the very foundations of the state. 44 It is they that are the source of hatred, quarrelling and strife, of sedition and of war. Nor do they only flaunt themselves abroad, or turn their blind onslaughts solely against others; even when prisoned within the heart they quarrel and fall out among themselves; and this cannot but render the whole of life embittered. Hence only the Wise Man, who prunes away all the rank growth of vanity and error, can possibly live untroubled by sorrow and by fear, content within the bounds that nature has set. 45 Nothing could be more useful or more conducive to well-being than Epicurus's doctrine as to the different classes of the desires. One kind he classified as both natural and necessary, a second as natural without being necessary, and a third as neither natural nor necessary; the principle of classification being that the necessary desires are gratified with little trouble or expense; the natural desires also require but little, since nature's own riches, which suffice to content her, are both easily procured and limited in amount; but for the imaginary¹⁰ desires no bound or limit can be discovered. 14 46 If then we observe that ignorance and error reduce the whole of life to confusion, while Wisdom alone is able to protect us from the onslaughts of appetite and the menaces of fear, teaching us to bear even the affronts of fortune with moderation, and showing us all the paths that lead to calmness and peace, why should we hesitate to avow that Wisdom is to be desired for the sake of the pleasures it brings and Folly to be avoided because of its injurious consequences?

47 "The same principle will lead us to pronounce that Temperance also is not desirable for its own sake, but because it bestows peace of mind, and soothes the heart with a tranquillizing sense of harmony. For it is temperance that warns us to be guided by reason in what we desire and avoid. Nor is it enough to judge what it is right to do or to leave undone; we also need to abide by our judgment. Most men however lack tenacity of purpose; their resolution weakens and succumbs as soon as the fair form of pleasure meets their gaze, and they surrender themselves prisoners to their passions, failing to foresee the inevitable result. Thus for the sake of a pleasure at once small in amount and unnecessary, and one which they might have procured by other means or even denied themselves altogether without pain, they incur serious disease, or loss of fortune, or disgrace, and not infrequently become liable to the penalties of the law and of the courts of justice. 48 Those on the other hand who are resolved so to enjoy their pleasures as to avoid all painful consequences therefrom, p53 and who retain their faculty of judgment and avoid being seduced by pleasure into courses that they perceive to be wrong, reap the very highest pleasure by forgoing pleasure. Similarly also they often voluntarily endure pain, to avoid incurring greater pain by not doing so. This clearly proves that Intemperance is not undesirable for its own sake, while Temperance is desirable not because it renounces pleasures, but because it procures greater pleasures.

15 49 "The same account will be found to hold good of Courage. The performance of labours, the undergoing of pains, are not in themselves attractive, nor are endurance, industry, watchfulness, nor yet that much lauded virtue, perseverance, nor even courage; but we aim at these virtues in order to live without anxiety and fear and so far as possible to be free from pain of mind and body. The fear of death plays havoc with the calm and even tenor of life, and to bow the head to pain and bear it abjectly and feebly is a pitiable thing; such weakness has caused many men to betray their parents or their friends, some their country, and very many utterly to ruin themselves. So on the other hand a strong and lofty spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow. It makes light of death, for the dead are only as they were before they were born. It is schooled to encounter pain by recollecting that pains of great severity are ended by death, and slight ones have frequent

intervals of respite; while those of medium intensity lie within our own control: we can bear them if they are endurable, or if they are not, we may serenely quit life's theatre, when the play has ceased to please us. These considerations prove p55 that timidity and cowardice are not blamed, nor courage and endurance praised, on their own account; the former are rejected because they beget pain, the latter coveted because they beget pleasure.

16 50 "It remains to speak of Justice, to complete the list of the virtues; but this admits of practically the same treatment as the others. Wisdom, Temperance and Courage I have shown to be so closely linked with Pleasure that they cannot possibly be severed or sundered from it. The same must be deemed to be the case with Justice. Not only does Justice never cause anyone harm, but on the contrary it always adds some benefit, partly owing to its essentially tranquillizing influence upon the mind, partly because of the hope that it warrants of a never-failing supply of the things that uncorrupted nature really needs. And just as Rashness, Licence and Cowardice ever torment the mind, ever awaken trouble and discord, so Unrighteousness, when firmly rooted in the heart, causes restlessness by the mere fact of its presence; and if once it has found expression in some deed of wickedness, however secret the act, yet it can never feel assured that it will always remain undetected. The usual consequences of crime are, first suspicion, next gossip and rumour, then comes the accuser, then the judge; many wrongdoers have even turned evidence against themselves, as happened in your consulship. 51 And even if any think themselves well fenced and fortified against detection by their fellow-men, they still dread the eye of heaven, and fancy that the pangs of anxiety night and day gnawing at their hearts are sent by Providence to punish them. But what can wickedness contribute p57 towards lessening the annoyances of life, commensurate with its effect in increasing them, owing to the burden of a guilty conscience, the penalties of the law and the hatred of one's fellows? Yet nevertheless some men indulge without limit their avarice, ambition and love of power, lust, gluttony and those other desires, which ill-gotten gains can never diminish but rather must inflame the more; insomuch that they appear proper subjects for restraint rather than for reformation. 52 Men of sound natures, therefore, are summoned by the voice of true reason to justice, equity and honesty. For one without eloquence or resources dishonesty is not good policy, since it is difficult for such a man to succeed in his designs, or to make good his success when once achieved. On the other hand, for the rich and clever generous conduct seems more in keeping, and liberality wins them affection and good will, the surest means to a life of peace; especially as there really is no motive for transgressing: 53 since the desires that spring from nature are easily gratified without doing any man wrong, while those that are imaginary ought to be resisted, for they set their affections upon nothing that is really wanted; while there is more loss inherent in Injustice itself than there is profit in the gains it brings. Hence Justice also cannot correctly be said to be desirable in and for itself; it is so because it is so highly productive of gratification. For esteem and affection are gratifying, because they render life safer and fuller of pleasure. Hence we hold that Unrighteousness is to be avoided not simply on account of the disadvantages that result from being unrighteous, but even far more because when it dwells in a man's p59 heart it never suffers him to breathe freely or know a moment's rest.

54 "If then even the glory of the Virtues, on which all the other philosophers love to expatiate so eloquently, has in the last resort no meaning unless it be based on pleasure, whereas pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring, it cannot be doubted that pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure.

17 5511 "The doctrine thus firmly established has corollaries which I will briefly expound. (1) The Ends of Goods and Evils themselves, that is, pleasure and pain, are not open to mistake; where people go wrong is in not knowing what things are productive of pleasure and pain. (2) Again, we aver that mental pleasures and pains arise out of bodily ones (and therefore I allow your contention¹² that any Epicureans who think otherwise put themselves out of court; and I am aware that many do, though not those who can speak with authority); but although men do experience mental pleasure that is agreeable and mental pain that is annoying, yet both of these we assert arise out of and are based upon bodily sensations. (3) Yet we maintain that this does not preclude mental pleasures and pains from being much more intense than those of the body; since the body can feel only what is present to it at the moment, whereas the mind is also cognizant of the past and of the future. For granting that pain of body is equally painful, yet our sensation of pain can be enormously increased by the belief that some evil of unlimited magnitude and duration threatens to befall us

hereafter. And p61 the same consideration may be transferred to pleasure: a pleasure is greater if not accompanied by any apprehension of evil. 56 This therefore clearly appears, that intense mental pleasure or distress contributes more to our happiness or misery than a bodily pleasure or pain of equal duration. (4) But we do not agree that when pleasure is withdrawn uneasiness at once ensues, unless the pleasure happens to have been replaced by a pain: while on the other hand one is glad to lose a pain even though no active sensation of pleasure comes in its place: a fact that serves to show how great a pleasure is the mere absence of pain. 57 (5) But just as we are elated by the anticipation of good things, so we are delighted by their recollection. Fools are tormented by the memory of former evils; wise men have the delight of renewing in graceful remembrance the blessings of the past. We have the power both to obliterate our misfortunes in an almost perpetual forgetfulness and to summon up pleasant and agreeable memories of our successes. But when we fix our mental vision closely on the events of the past, then sorrow or gladness ensues according as these were evil or good.

18 "Here is indeed a royal road to happiness — open, simple, and direct! For clearly man can have no greater good than complete freedom from pain and sorrow coupled with the enjoyment of the highest bodily and mental pleasures. Notice then how the theory embraces every possible enhancement of life, every aid to the attainment of that Chief Good which is our object. Epicurus, the man whom you denounce as a voluptuary, cries aloud that no one can live pleasantly without living wisely, honourably and justly, and no one wisely, honourably and p63 justly without living pleasantly. 58 For a city rent by faction cannot prosper, nor a house whose masters are at strife; much less then can a mind divided against itself and filled with inward discord taste any particle of pure and liberal pleasure. But one who is perpetually swayed by conflicting and incompatible counsels and desires can know no peace or calm. 59 Why, if the pleasantness of life is diminished by the more serious bodily diseases, how much more must it be diminished by the diseases of the mind! But extravagant and imaginary desires, for riches, fame, power, and also for licentious pleasures, are nothing but mental diseases. Then, too, there are grief, trouble and sorrow, which gnaw the heart and consume it with anxiety, if men fail to realize that the mind need feel no pain unconnected with some pain of body, present or to come. Yet there is no foolish man but is afflicted by some one of these diseases; therefore there is no foolish man that is not unhappy. 60 Moreover, there is death, the stone of Tantalus ever hanging over men's heads; and superstition, that poisons and destroys all peace of mind. Besides, they do not recollect their past nor enjoy their present blessings; they merely look forward to those of the future, and as these are of necessity uncertain, they are consumed with agony and terror; and the climax of their torment is when they perceive too late that all their dreams of wealth or station, power or fame, have come to nothing. For they never attain any of the pleasures, the hope of which inspired them to undergo all their arduous toils. 61 Or look again at others, petty, narrow-minded men, or confirmed pessimists, or spiteful, envious, ill-tempered creatures, unsociable, abusive, brutal; others again enslaved p65 to the follies of love, impudent or reckless, wanton, headstrong and yet irresolute, always changing their minds. Such failings render their lives one unbroken round of misery. The conclusion is that no foolish man can be happy, nor any wise man fail to be happy. This is a truth that we establish far more conclusively than do the Stoics. For they maintain that nothing is good save that vague phantom which they entitle Moral Worth, a title more splendid than substantial; and say that Virtue resting on this Moral Worth has no need of pleasure, but is herself her own sufficient happiness.

19 62 "At the same time this Stoic doctrine can be stated in a form which we do not object to, and indeed ourselves endorse. For Epicurus thus presents his Wise Man who is always happy: his desires are kept within bounds; death he disregards; he has a true conception, untainted by fear, of the Divine nature; he does not hesitate to depart from life, if that would better his condition. Thus equipped he enjoys perpetual pleasure, for there is no moment when the pleasures he experiences do not outbalance the pains; since he remembers the past with gratitude, grasps the present with a full realization of its pleasantness, and does not rely upon the future; he looks forward to it, but finds his true enjoyment in the present. Also he is entirely free from the vices that I instanced a few moments ago, and he derives no inconsiderable pleasure from comparing his own existence with the life of the foolish. More, any pains that the Wise Man may encounter are never so severe but that he has more cause for gladness than for sorrow. 63 Again, it is a fine saying of Epicurus that 'the Wise Man is but little interfered p67 with by fortune: the great concerns of life, the things that matter, are controlled by his own wisdom and reason'; and that 'no greater pleasure could be derived from a life of infinite

duration than is actually afforded by this existence which we know to be finite.' Logic, on which your school lays such stress, he held to be of no effect either as a guide to conduct or as an aid to thought. Natural Philosophy he deemed all-important. This science¹³ explains to us the meaning of terms, the nature of predication, and the law of consistency and contradiction; secondly, a thorough knowledge of the facts of nature relieves us of the burden of superstition, frees us from fear of death, and shields us against the disturbing effects of ignorance, which is often in itself a cause of terrifying apprehensions; lastly, to learn what nature's real requirements are improves the moral character also. Besides, it is only by firmly grasping a well-established scientific system, observing the Rule or Canon that has fallen as it were from heaven so that all men may know it — only by making that hope always to stand fast in our belief, unshaken by the eloquence of any man. 64 On the other hand, without a full understanding of the world of nature it is impossible to maintain the truth of our sense-perceptions. Further, every mental presentation has its origin in sensation: so that no certain knowledge will be possible, unless [all sensations are true](#), as the theory of Epicurus teaches that they are. Those who deny the validity of sensation and say that nothing can be perceived, having excluded p69 the evidence of the senses, are unable even to expound their own argument. Besides, by abolishing knowledge and science they abolish all possibility of rational life and action. Thus Natural Philosophy supplies courage to face the fear of death; resolution to resist the terrors of religion; peace of mind, for it removes all ignorance of the mysteries of nature; self-control, for it explains the nature of the desires and distinguishes their different kinds; and, as I showed just now, the Canon or Criterion of Knowledge, which Epicurus also established, gives a method of discerning truth from falsehood.

20 65 "There remains a topic that is pre-eminently germane to this discussion, I mean the subject of Friendship. Your school maintains that if pleasure be the Chief Good, friendship will cease to exist. Now Epicurus's pronouncement about friendship is that of all the means to happiness that wisdom has devised, none is greater, none more fruitful, none more delightful than this. Nor did he only commend this doctrine by his eloquence, but far more by the example of his life and conduct. How great a thing such friendship is, is shown by the mythical stories of antiquity. Review the legends from the remotest ages, and, copious and varied as they are, you will barely find in them three pairs of friends, beginning with Theseus and ending with Orestes. Yet Epicurus in a single house and that a small one maintained a whole company of friends, united by the closest sympathy and affection; and this still goes on in the Epicurean school. But to return to our subject, for there is no need of personal instances: 66 I notice that the topic of friendship has been treated by Epicureans in three ways. (1) Some have denied p71 that pleasures affecting our friends are in themselves to be desired by us in the same degree as we desire our own pleasures. This doctrine is thought by some critics to undermine the foundations of friendship; however, its supporters defend their position, and in my opinion have no difficulty in making good their ground. They argue that friendship can no more be sundered from pleasure than can the virtues, which we have discussed already. A solitary, friendless life must be beset by secret dangers and alarms. Hence reason itself advises the acquisition of friends; their possession gives confidence, and a firmly rooted hope of winning pleasure. 67 And just as hatred, jealousy and contempt are hindrances to pleasure, so friendship is the most trustworthy preserver and also creator of pleasure alike for our friends and for ourselves. It affords us enjoyment in the present, and it inspires us with hopes for the near and distant future. Thus it is not possible to secure uninterrupted gratification in life without friendship, nor yet to preserve friendship itself unless we love our friends as much as ourselves. Hence this unselfishness does occur in friendship, while also friendship is closely linked with pleasure. For we rejoice in our friends' joy as much as in our own, and are equally pained by their sorrows. 68 Therefore the Wise Man will feel exactly the same towards his friend as he does towards himself, and will exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as he would for his own. All that has been said about the essential connexion of the virtues with pleasure must be repeated about friendship. Epicurus well said (I give almost his exact words): 'The same creed that has given us courage to overcome all fear of everlasting p73 or long-enduring evil hereafter, has discerned that friendship is our strongest safeguard in this present term of life.' 69 — (2) Other Epicureans though by no means lacking in insight are a little less courageous in defying the opprobrious criticisms of the Academy. They fear that if we hold friendship to be desirable only for the pleasure that it affords to ourselves, it will be thought that it is crippled altogether. They therefore say that the first advances and overtures, and the original inclination to form an attachment, are prompted by the desire for pleasure, but that when the progress of the intercourse has led to intimacy, the relationship blossoms into an affection strong enough to make us love our friends for their own sake, even though no practical advantage accrues from their friendship. Does not

familiarity endear to us localities, temples, cities, gymnasia and playing-grounds, horses and hounds, gladiatorial shows and fights with wild beasts? Then how much more natural and reasonable that this should be able to happen in our intercourse with our fellow?men! 70 — (3) The third view is that wise men have made a sort of compact to love their friends no less than themselves. We can understand the possibility of this, and we often see it happen. Clearly no more effective means to happiness could be found than such an alliance.

"All these considerations go to prove not only that the theory of friendship is not embarrassed by the identification of the Chief Good with pleasure, but also that without this no foundation for friendship whatsoever can be found.

21 71 "If then the doctrine I have set forth is clearer and more luminous than daylight itself; if it is derived entirely from Nature's source; if my p75 whole discourse relies throughout for confirmation on the unbiased and unimpeachable evidence of the senses; if lisping infants, nay even dumb animals, prompted by Nature's teaching, almost find voice to proclaim that there is no welfare but pleasure, no hardship but pain — and their judgment in these matters is neither sophisticated nor biased — ought we not to feel the greatest gratitude to him who caught this utterance of Nature's voice, and grasped its import so firmly and so fully that he has guided all sane-minded men into the paths of peace and happiness, calmness and repose? You are pleased to think him uneducated. The reason is that he refused to consider any education worth the name that did not help to school us in happiness. 72 Was he to spend his time, as you encourage Triarius and me to do, in perusing poets, who give us nothing solid and useful, but merely childish amusement? Was he to occupy himself like Plato with music and geometry, arithmetic and astronomy, which starting from false premises cannot be true, and which moreover if they were true would contribute nothing to make our lives pleasanter and therefore better? Was he, I say, to study arts like these, and neglect the master art, so difficult and correspondingly so fruitful, the art of living? No! Epicurus was not uneducated: the real philistines are those who ask us to go on studying till old age the subjects that we ought to be ashamed not to have learnt in boyhood." Thus concluding, he added: "I have explained my own view, but solely with the object of learning what your verdict is. I have never hitherto had a satisfactory opportunity of hearing it."